

# Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office

**Hall, Jacquelyn**

---

**From:** Amanda Simmons <amanda.simmons1@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 23, 2016 8:22 AM  
**To:** Hall, Jacquelyn  
**Subject:** Fwd: Incidents regarding SRSO Employee

14th November 2016

Amanda Simmons  
5169 Rowe Trail  
Pace, FL 32571  
(850)543-6999  
[amanda.simmons1@yahoo.com](mailto:amanda.simmons1@yahoo.com)

To Whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter to explain the multiple incidents that have occurred between G4S Secure Solution Employees and Santa Rosa Sheriff's Office Detention Deputy Sergeant Ovando Blankenship.

On or about the Month of January 2016 I began working at the Santa Rosa County Sheriff's office in Milton Florida as a Contract Worker with G4S Secure Solution. I was employed to be a Armed Inmate Transport Officer assigned to the Transportation Department with a team of employees from both the Sheriff's office and G4S. the Following names of officers include both past and present employees.

G4S Staff: J. Pfefferkorn, G. Beck, J.Hall, L. Taylor, R. Hicks, I. Forster, D.Mayo, L. Labauve, L. Simmons, R. Bean, B. Smith and April Epley.

Santa Rosa Staff: P. Killam, D. Gehringer, P. Moorer, M. Howington, J. Lukasik.

Soon after I began working here I started noticing the issues and at times hostile work environment between G4S Staff Members and Sergeant Blankenship. The First encounter I had with Sergeant Blankenship happened to be my third day on the job in the Lobby by Dispatch. Sergeant McWilliams introduced me to him because he was going to my Defensive Tactics Trainer the following day. His first words to me were "you like to smile a lot don't you?" I stated "yes sir I do, I am a happy person" when he responded with " well tomorrow i'm going to make it where you don't smile so you better take some Ibuprofen tonight because you're going to in pain tomorrow". I knew from that moment in a quick conversation that this person was not the type of person I wanted to upset.

# Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office

Over time many G4S employees had issues with Sergeant Blankenship that did not directly affect me and in fact I was the only one other than Sergeant Moorer that could do traveling transports with Sergeant Blankenship however it did put many restraints on the entire Transportation team.

From him physically injuring Officer J. Hall in Defensive Tactics and telling her days prior he was going to hurt her, to him being aggressive and hostile towards her in front of inmates in the Sally port when he had no reason to. His actions and volatile statements of "waiting on the Purge" and "i'm adding them to my purge list" had made each of us feel uncomfortable and at times scared to work with him. We as a team, multiple times turned to our G4S Supervisor whom at the time was LT Pfefferkorn and asked him to address Sergeant Blankenship and explain our frustrations regarding his demeanor and constant unprofessional comments. Each time we were met with negativity stating they couldn't punish him for statements that were not able to be verified.

When employees went higher which was to Sergeant Moorer the Transportation Supervisor and to the Administration Captain, Captain Gehringer, we were sent a email stating that if we wanted to file an incident report regarding a Santa Rosa Sheriff's Office employee we would need to get a notarized letter and turn it in.

Sergeant Moorer finally took a stand around March of 2016 when she asked Captain Gehringer to have Sergeant Blankenship moved out of Transportation due to the incidents becoming worse and causing so much friction between the team as a whole. The Jail Administration did not agree with the move but did agree to only allow him to work Jury Selection and Jury Trial which wasn't much of a solution but it was enough for him to be out of the Transportation office where we were able to feel at ease and comfortable in our workplace.

On May 17th 2016 at 1:39pm each Transportation Officer received a email from Captain Gehringer stating that "Sgt. Moorer will be out for the next few weeks. Sgt. Blankenship has been assigned to assist in the Transportation unit".

Sgt. Blankenship and Deputy Howington will be required to work closely together to ensure that the daily functions are covered by staff assigned to the unit.

We were in shock because the same personnel whom knew how much negativity and hostility this employee has caused is now placing him back in Transportation full time to work with us again. Initially when we were made aware of SGT Moorer's injuries and that it would in fact put her out of work for a long period of time due to surgery that Deputy Howington would be in charge of Transportation due to him being aware of every aspect of the job. When Administration placed Sergeant Blankenship as the Temporary Supervisor, we (G4S) as a team came together and decided to make it work that regardless of how much we knew it would create a uncomfortable environment due to past

# Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office

incidents that we would deal with the circumstances and do our best to complete each task that was given.

In the coming months we would lose Deputy Howington to a new job within the facility, suffer multiple losses of employees on the G4S side, and Lieutenant Beck became our new G4S Supervisor.

We did our best to just deal with Sergeant Blankenship's aggressive demeanor toward civilians in the courthouse, the aggressive/Abrasive behavior when we would go to our supervisor first instead of him, the threats he made to inmates and staff members, the picking up of wrong inmates at a surrounding county jail.

Over the last three Months for reasons I still have not figured out, Sergeant Blankenship's behaviour has now moved from being Abrasive and aggressive at the whole team to being that way to myself. I have approached Sergeant Blankenship on several occasions, In the Parking Lot after work, in his office (ERT Room), and even in the Transportation Office and each time he has stated that everything is ok. The final incident that occurred where I feel uncomfortable to work around him was on Thursday November 10th 2016, when I asked for help multiple times from Sergeant Blankenship regarding out of county Transport orders and he continued to ignore my efforts of help. When My supervisor Lieutenant Beck returned late that afternoon I explained the situation and Sergeant Blankenship's actions and that I will not tolerate this behavior from him. Lieutenant Beck Made the decision to have Deputy Lukasik do the transport to Escambia County Jail to pick up the Court & Return Inmate because it was a holiday for G4S on Friday. I sent a email to Captain Gehringer at 4:13pm regarding the Transport of the Juvenile.

On Monday November 14th 2016 at approximately 0715 hours Sergeant Blankenship came into the Transportation Office where the following employees were witnesses to his conversation. Sergeant Moorner, Lieutenant Beck, Officer Bean, and I believe Deputy Pugh.

Sergeant Blankenship asked everyone to listen up and he is making it very clear that if a Transport is scheduled he is to be advised of it and he will be the one to authorize it not anyone else. He was facing myself and Lieutenant Beck and stated that he was not aware of any transport orders that came in that were needing to be done for next week. I stopped him when he said that and explained to him that in fact I personally went to him multiple times asking for help with transport orders and I received no help from him. I explained to him that I even went as far as emailing Captain Gehringer, going to classifications for policies on Transport Orders on Juveniles and

# Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office

sending Officer Smith to the courthouse to get the documents certified. Sergeant Blankenship stated that regardless he was not made aware of it and he should have been called, at the end of the conversation he made the comment "do i am myself clear" At which time Lieutenant Beck stated "Blankenship this was a miscommunication between myself and you, not simmons" even after that comment Sergeant Blankenship still wanted to to be Abrasive towards me asking "do I make myself clear" I did not answer him when he asked the question, He then stated "I will take that as a yes" I turned around and stated to Sergeant Blankenship "I notified my Supervisor of every single situation that happened on Thursday, My supervisor was the one that made the decisions, NOT ME" Sergeant Blankenship still demanded he was the one to authorize things in Transport and he is to be called. Once Sergeant Blankenship stepped out of the office I felt I needed to communicate my concerns and feelings to my supervisor Lieutenant Beck whom told me that it is out of his hand and the only thing I could do is write a letter and have it notarized Per Captain Gehringer's email and give the letter to G4S Administration.

I went home that night very emotional because this man has constantly been allowed to use his power of rank to make employees feel scared and uncomfortable to work or even stand up to him for fear of retaliation. Is the reason he acts like this because I am a woman? Is it because I work for G4S? Is it because I am a contractor? The questions I ask myself everyday, I thought about my co-workers, they deserve better than this, every employee deserves to come to work in a harassment free workplace, I continued to ask "when will this stop?" "when will this problem be addressed?". The Jail Administration is not taking these incidents seriously and has led me to writing this letter and even turning in my Resignation in fear that this problem will never be addressed or fixed and because of my expressed concern of Sergeant Blankenship behaviour that the Jail Administration would retaliate towards myself.

I have witnessed Sergeant Blankenship continuously make decisions that have the potential to put each staff member he has worked with as well the entire Santa Rosa Sheriff's Office Organization in jeopardy.

While initially I thought these were isolated incidents, I have noticed a pattern in Sergeant Blankenship's hostile and aggressive behavior escalate over the last year and it is negatively affecting the entire team.

I ask you to look at the totality of the the circumstances and hear each of us when we ask "when will this stop?".

Respectfully,

# Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office

Amanda M. Simmons

# Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office

**McCurdy, Joe**

---

**From:** Stevens, Heather  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 07, 2016 3:25 PM  
**To:** McCurdy, Joe  
**Subject:** FW: G4S Simmons, Amanda  
**Attachments:** SDet Admin 16112308580.pdf

Heather Stevens | Human Resources Director | Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office | ☎ Office: 850.983.1201,  
Fax: 850-983-1211 | ✉ [hstevens@srsso.net](mailto:hstevens@srsso.net)

Confidentiality Note: This e-mail, and any attachment to it, contains privileged and confidential information intended only for the use of the individual(s) or entity(ies) named on the e-mail. The information may be proprietary, confidential, privileged and exempt from disclosure under applicable law. If the reader of this e-mail is not the intended recipient, or the employee or agent responsible for delivering it to the intended recipient, the reader is hereby put on notice that any use, dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If the reader has received this communication in error, please immediately notify the sender by telephone (850-983-1201) or e-mail and delete all copies of this e-mail and any attachments. Thank you.

---

**From:** Killam, Patty  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 23, 2016 8:41 AM  
**To:** Julie B. Topper ([julie.topper@usa.g4s.com](mailto:julie.topper@usa.g4s.com))  
**Cc:** Stevens, Heather  
**Subject:** G4S Simmons, Amanda

I received this from G4S Amanda, Simmons this am after talking with her about her job in Transportation. I will be talking to Sheriff Hall in reference to this today if he is at work.

Major Patricia Killam  
Detention Division/Jail Administrator  
Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office  
[pkillam@srsso.net](mailto:pkillam@srsso.net)

850 - 983-1209 Office  
850 - 393-2006 Cellular

Our life is what our thoughts make it.

Marcus Aurelius

Confidentiality Notice: This email, including any attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain confidential and privileged information. Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure, or distribution is prohibited.

# Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office

According to Florida State Statute 119, intelligence information is exempt from public records release. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by reply email and destroy all copies of the original message.



# Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office

communication is strictly prohibited. If the reader has received this communication in error, please immediately notify the sender by telephone (850-983-1201) or e-mail and delete all copies of this e-mail and any attachments. Thank you.

---

**From:** Killam, Patty  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 23, 2016 9:46 AM  
**To:** Stevens, Heather  
**Subject:** G4S Amanda Simmons

Amanda Simmons advised me verbally this am that Blankenship was mentally unstable and should not be working at Sheriff's Office.

Memo to file

Major Patricia Killam  
Detention Division/Jail Administrator  
Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office  
[pkillam@srsos.net](mailto:pkillam@srsos.net)

850 - 983-1209 Office  
850 - 393-2006 Cellular

Our life is what our thoughts make it.

Marcus Aurelius

Confidentiality Notice: This email, including any attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain confidential and privileged information. Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure, or distribution is prohibited. According to Florida State Statute 119, intelligence information is exempt from public records release. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by reply email and destroy all copies of the original message.



# Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office

**McCurdy, Joe**

---

**From:** Stevens, Heather  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 07, 2016 3:26 PM  
**To:** McCurdy, Joe  
**Subject:** FW: G4S Amanda Simmons

Heather Stevens | Human Resources Director | Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office | ☎ Office: 850.983.1201, Fax: 850-983-1211 | ✉ [hstevens@srso.net](mailto:hstevens@srso.net)

Confidentiality Note: This e-mail, and any attachment to it, contains privileged and confidential information intended only for the use of the individual(s) or entity(ies) named on the e-mail. The information may be proprietary, confidential, privileged and exempt from disclosure under applicable law. If the reader of this e-mail is not the intended recipient, or the employee or agent responsible for delivering it to the intended recipient, the reader is hereby put on notice that any use, dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If the reader has received this communication in error, please immediately notify the sender by telephone (850-983-1201) or e-mail and delete all copies of this e-mail and any attachments. Thank you.

---

**From:** Hall, Wendell  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 23, 2016 10:32 AM  
**To:** Stevens, Heather  
**Subject:** RE: G4S Amanda Simmons

No!

---

**From:** Stevens, Heather  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 23, 2016 10:19 AM  
**To:** Johnson, Bob; Hall, Wendell  
**Subject:** FW: G4S Amanda Simmons

I just received the below email from Major Killam. Do we want to do a fitness for duty or how do you want to proceed?

Heather Stevens | Human Resources Director | Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office | ☎ Office: 850.983.1201, Fax: 850-983-1211 | ✉ [hstevens@srso.net](mailto:hstevens@srso.net)

Confidentiality Note: This e-mail, and any attachment to it, contains privileged and confidential information intended only for the use of the individual(s) or entity(ies) named on the e-mail. The information may be proprietary, confidential, privileged and exempt from disclosure under applicable law. If the reader of this e-mail is not the intended recipient, or the employee or agent responsible for delivering it to the intended recipient, the reader is hereby put on notice that any use, dissemination, distribution or copying of this